



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS



March 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The hyacinths and daffodils are blooming in my yard. FISH is blooming as well!

The number of new volunteers that want to be involved is heartwarming. Our name in the community means so much. FISH has been a constant presence in Williamsburg for almost 50 years. Our clients know there is help available with food, clothing, and housewares.

FISH is a Headliner for the Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg this year and, as such, we will be helping Kiwanis with their Golf Tournament on April 29. See more info on this event later in this issue. Volunteers will be needed at Kingsmill that day, so please let Maura Rush or me know if you can help.

A special note of thanks to our Edge District neighbor, the Virginia Beer Company, which helped us relocate the blue donation bin to a different area of our parking lot. We are working to come up with ways to utilize our parking area more effectively.

The Clothes Closet is also trying new ideas by putting out more racks of "free" clothing, socks and other items that do not count against client allotments. These racks are being replenished several times a day. This has been a positive move to get more items into the community.

Safety First!! We have had several injuries lately from tripping and falling over items left out. Let's all be very aware of the many boxes and crates we deal with daily and keep our precious FISH family safe.

If you have suggestions and/or ideas, FISH would like to hear them.

Thank you to everyone at FISH for all you do!

Jill Holroyd
FISH President
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Thank you!

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Donate



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Acknowledgements & Announcements



5th Annual Golf Tournament



Date: Monday, April 29, 2024
Times: 12:00 Registration - 1:00 Shotgun Start - 5:30 Dinner
Where: Kingsmill Resort River Course
1010 Kingsmill Rd, Williamsburg, VA
Format: Captain's Choice

The deadline to register is April 12, 2024.

FISH is one of four Headliners in 2024 that will receive benefits from this event.

For more information and to register, follow this [link](#) to the website.

We need volunteers to help with registration, hot dog stand, etc., so please contact either Maura at maurarush@hotmail.com or Jill.

Conference Room Calendar

A calendar for reserving the Billie Johnston Conference Room has been posted on the back of the conference room door.

You may mark the calendar to reserve the space for your meetings.

There was a note on the New Client intake form of a couple over 60 that they had called back to express their thanks.

Grace in times of Adversity



Leslie Jingluski, Director of Community Engagement for Avalon, attended our February Board of Directors meeting to give an overview of Avalon's services. Later, the FISH Volunteers present expressed appreciation for Leslie's update. Here are highlights from her presentation:

Avalon is dual accredited with the Department of Criminal Justice Services. We are accredited to provide services for Domestic and Sexual Violence. Our mission is to work to end domestic and sexual violence by breaking the cycle of abuse through prevention, education, shelter and support services in the greater Williamsburg and Middle Peninsula communities.

We value our 20-year relationship with FISH as a provider of essentials for our clients. By providing these necessities, Avalon's staff can respond to the unique needs of our clients.

Avalon Center is always looking for volunteers to help us with our mission. Interested people should visit avaloncenter.org.

Recently in an article, Dan Fontaine mentioned that our local churches continue to be a major support for FISH through donations and volunteering. That is so true and evident in our In-Kind Donations Book which shows church after church (too many to list) that give regularly in smaller donations, not necessarily large food drives, yet faithful. We very much appreciate the loyalty and dedication of all - big or small.

Food Donation Connection Harvest Program

FISH has been selected to participate in the Food Donation Connection Harvest Program that encourages local restaurants to donate their surplus food to local non-profit organizations that feed those in need. FISH has been linked to the Olive Garden on Richmond Road and we've been picking up items for the past month that included various sauces, soups, lasagna, and one very delicious dessert.

We are so grateful to have this opportunity and we know that our clients enjoy the special treats that this relationship provides.

-- Maura Rush, VP and Food Donation Coordinator



This year, FISH has the opportunity to participate in the **GIVE LOCAL 757!** initiative on April 23. This giving day helps non-profit organizations, such as FISH, raise unrestricted funds to help fund our mission.

We need your help! Please help us reach, and perhaps exceed, our goal of \$5,000! Please tell your friends and family about the important work we do, and ask them to join us in helping to make a difference.

Get ready to give! Mark your calendars and set your alarm clocks! On April 23, visit [givelocal757.org](https://www.givelocal757.org) and make a donation to FISH. All giving will start at 12:01 a.m. and end at 11:59 p.m. on April 23, so make sure to get your gift in on time!

Check out the monetary prizes that FISH could win at: <https://www.givelocal757.org/prizes>

Thank you in advance for participating and supporting us!

Fashion Inspiration



The display of Springtime clothing by Director Tracy Parris signals the official start of the transition from winter to summer clothing in the Clothes Closet. We are accepting warm weather clothing, shoes, and accessories.

-- Cindy Tocci, Clothing Co-Coordinator

Treasured Memories

Boyd Chamberlain was a long-time volunteer on the Monday Morning Food Lion Team--a group of dedicated guys, led by Holly Trotter, who lug food every Monday from Food Lion to FISH. Boyd started volunteering at FISH in the 2015-2016 timeframe. He was a true gentleman and dear friend with a ready smile.

Our condolences to the family. [Full Obituary](#)

Empty Bowls Virginia Peninsula

On March 8, the nonprofit Empty Bowls Virginia Peninsula held its unique annual fundraiser. While this is an international organization, each locality produces its own event, and donations stay local. The empty bowl is a symbol of hunger and need in our community.

The event was held at The Historic Post Office in Hampton and produced by volunteers. It is a sell-out every year. Potters and other artists donate their work for the silent auction and the bowl give-away.

Attendees may sample soups from several restaurants, enjoy the music, and participate in the silent auction.



FISH is honored to be a grant recipient of Empty Bowls.

Some of the bowls were created and donated by FISH Director and Clothing Co-Coordinator Patti MacGillivray, Potter.

Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail



Staff delivered a well-timed donation of over 200 blankets at the end of February.

PORCH



Just like clockwork, Sarah Weiser brought in a great donation from her PORCH food drive in the Holly Hills neighborhood. She manages to do this for FISH every four months.

Amidst the excitement and activity of receiving and shelving donations, the volunteers always try to get a picture and basic information. Any omissions are not intentional.

James City Ruritan Club

Thank you to the James City Ruritan Club for collecting recyclables to make this Trex bench for FISH. Benches are important so that our clients can sit comfortably while we bag their groceries, or while their designated family member selects clothing.



Soroptimist International of Williamsburg



Right before Christmas, this group collected and donated over 200 pairs of underwear for women and girls and women in keeping with their mission: to provide women and girls access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. <https://siwilliamsburg.org/>

Becky Paluzsay (L) and Willie Mae McCracken, President (R)

Queens Lake Middle School

Tori Otstot, teacher, coordinated and delivered this terrific donation from our nearby middle school.



Special Delivery



Baskets for new parents were donated to the Clothes Closet. The baskets contained a variety of newborn supplies and clothing. Recipients were surprised and very thankful.

Volunteer Hosted Neighborhood Drive

Laura Arndt, a Pantry volunteer, saw that FISH needed food, clothing, and housewares. She decided she would ask a few neighbors to join her in hosting a drive in their neighborhood. The hosts created a personalized flyer naming FISH, drop-off times and places, and suggested items based on a list provided by our Pantry and Clothes Closet Coordinators. Laura's team sent out the flyer to all of their neighbors asking them to drop off whatever they could at a centralized drop-off spot for five days in early February. Their small neighborhood collected around 20 bags of clothing, blankets, children's shoes and 10 bags of food. Laura said, "The drive was easy to do and so many of the neighbors were happy to participate. It was satisfying to know that many of the items have already found their way to new homes. We will do another drive in a few months."

Planning a Drive?

Is your organization thinking about having a drive to collect food, clothing and/or housewares for FISH? If so, please contact Maura Rush, VP and Food Donations Coordinator, at maurarush@hotmail.com for food drives and Cindy Tocci at cmtvirginia@cox.net for clothing and housewares drives. They will provide guidance on holding the drive, what is needed, plus will schedule your delivery of collected items. Every drive, no matter the size, helps FISH better serve our community. Thank you in advance.

-- Cindy Tocci, Clothing Co-Coordinator

King of Glory Lutheran Church



Trevor and Leigha Toft, both on staff at the King of Glory Lutheran Church, delivered 15 huge bags of winter clothing and over \$400 collected by the church.

Brandon Woods



Once again, the Brandon Woods community supported FISH with a generous donation of 100 bags of food. Thanks to Sharon Villines for organizing the drive and Kim Beagle (left) and her "helper" for delivering it.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

All Inspiring

Grace Papakonstantinou Pantry

*Most of you know her as Grace Aprahamian.
Congratulations to Grace on her recent
marriage and new last name.*

*Grace is holding one of the beautiful Easter baskets
created by our faithful anonymous donor.*

Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?

A1. I chose to volunteer at FISH as an opener into social service while finishing my degree.

Q2. What do you find most rewarding about volunteering at FISH?

A2. What I find rewarding is working with the most wonderful people who choose to give a helping hand to the clients. Not only are the other volunteers I work with inspiring, but the clients as well. Hearing their stories and how they push forward through all hardships makes it worth my slightest effort.

Q3. Do you have a specific experience while volunteering at FISH that you would like to share?

A3. One specific experience that comes to mind is when I was helping a couple and their child in Clothing, and seeing how excited and happy they were to be able to pick and choose from so many clothes.

Q4. Is there anything else you would like others to know about you?

A4. I feel grateful to be able to volunteer at a place filled with the most amazing and inspiring people.